THE commonwealth
RecordsManager

Working Together

Bob Nawrocki, CRM, State Records Administrator

One lesson I learned early on in my career is that records managers are usually lone rangers. There may be other people who have part-time responsibility for records management but usually you are the only one. It was always difficult to find someone to talk to or who understood what I was talking about or who could give advice. The telephone was my lifeline, and once the Internet came along, I could reach out to records managers around the world. I was in heaven when I came to the Library since I was surrounded by many talented colleagues.

Needless to say, we do not want you to feel lonely out there as we are only a phone call or e-mail away. There are many ways in which we can work together to solve our problems. The Library's Records and Information Analysts are here to work with you to help you perform your job.

We provide workshops on many topics both in Richmond and around the state. Now that budgets have stabilized we will be able to hold more workshops around the state. We can also customize our workshops to your needs so that we can train persons in your agency or locality.

A new program that has been started is to use focus groups to help us develop new general retention schedules. This approach was successful in developing the public schools general schedule. New groups are being started to cover law enforcement and electronic records. The public schools records managers group is continuing to insure that GS 21 is always current.

Chris Gorey, the Electronic Records Coordinator, is working on various guidelines to cover many of the questions you have. Chris is also responsible for redesigning the Records Management and Imaging Services Division's portion of the Library's web site to make it easier to use and to provide more information than ever before. There will be more information, frequently asked questions, and links to additional information.

In reality, there are no lone records managers in Virginia. You are part of an exclusive club that works to preserve Virginia's heritage and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of how we manage the Commonwealth's records.

Frank English, who has worked in records management for the last 17 years, retires this July. Many of you know Frank as his alter ego - Recman. Frank is always generous with his considerable knowledge and is our corporate memory. Whenever we ask "why do we do this?" Frank has the answer. My only request is that when Frank

leaves, we get his phone number! Good luck and Godspeed Frank, enjoy your retirement.

Dedicated to the efficient and economical maintenance of Virginia's public records

Is There a SIG in Your Future?
Russ Riter, Records and Information Management Analyst

Are your records management duties specialized? If they are then you may be interested in a Special Interest Group (SIG) for your area of expertise. These groups are designed to bring together records people from specific areas such as public schools, colleges and universities, law enforcement, public safety, and health and human services. Within the SIG groups, individuals can network and share ideas, ask questions, and share solutions to various records problems.

One special interest group has already started. In December 2003, the Public Schools Records Consortium (PSRC) began meeting to discuss those common records issues that affect every public school division. This group has been spearheaded by Angela Mitchell, Records Manager for Williamsburg-James City County schools, and by Nancy Tyler from the Fairfax County Public School System. Mitchell and Tyler moderate the meetings that are held at the Library of Virginia. Currently the group has been meeting every two months at the LVA on Wednesday at 10:00 A.M.

The PSRC meetings have been attended by approximately 15 - 20 individuals who are interested or responsible for the keeping of school records. Each meeting has also been attended by State Department of Education employees who have shared their expertise with the group. School guidance, federal programs, school health services, and DMV have been some of the subjects covered during the meetings. The meeting in June highlighted the psychological files that are maintained by the schools. The PSRC provides a venue for local school divisions and for the Department of Education to come together for a common purpose.

HAVE TRUCK – WILL TRANSPORT
Ben Smith, Manager, State Records Center

As Manager of the State Records Center (SRC), I have spoken to many state and local agencies about their records storage needs and, with the exception of our Richmond Service Area, they are concerned with transporting their scheduled inactive records from their office to The Library of Virginia State Records Center. The thought of renting a truck or getting a vehicle from the motor pool does not excite many records officers. Additionally, spending the day loading the boxes from "where-ever", spending half the day driving to Richmond, unloading the records at the Records Center and driving home, hot, tired and possibly sweaty just does not appeal to some folks. And such has been the plight of our customers operating around the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Until now.

Last year the SRC introduced a wider pick up service area, on a limited basis, to test the reaction of our customers. This new service allows current and future customers the option of having the SRC staff pick up their scheduled records using a LVA owned and operated van/truck and deliver them to the SRC for safe, secure storage. The service is now being offered to all customers within a 150 mile range of Richmond.

The cost for this service is very reasonable. Cost estimates are based on pickup location, number of boxes, travel time, and labor for loading/unloading. A written quote may be mailed/faxed to you on LVA stationary or emailed to you with the hard copy delivered to you at pick up. When the quote is accepted, a pick up date is scheduled.

For those of you who are not convinced that The Library of Virginia State Records Center is the best place for records storage and feel that storing them yourself is a better idea, please let me pass on to you some "Food for Thought":

• The maximum capacity of a 10 ft. x 10 ft. x 8 ft. room is 567 cubic foot size boxes and that is with the door opening to the outside.
• At $20.00 per square foot of leased office space cost, that equates to $2,000.00 per month or $3.53 per box per month.
• A practical capacity to access these records would reduce the volume of boxes stored to 279 cubic feet of records or $7.17 per box per month.
• Those same 567 boxes

The More Things Change .... Part Deux

Records Management in the 21st Century

As this writer gets ready to retire, he looks back at the last twenty years of records management with nostalgia. One fond memory is of the claim in the mid 80's that "In ten years, there will no longer be any paper records". Those ten years have long since past and we still have paper records. One very progressive state agency even went to a paperless system for its prime function, but after a few years, they started keeping paper again. Although their system was set up to never create paper, human nature took over and human beings wanted and did create paper for their own use.

Paper records give us something that no electronic record can ever give, a tactile response; you can touch and feel paper records. Physical items have a feel to them, are more "real" than any electronic record. I've met some researchers who are much too fond of paper; they seem to caress and fondle each and every page. The same applies to other forms of electronic communication. MP3 may be great, right now, but I can't imagine anyone cherishing an MP3 file like my wife cherishes her *Elvis Solid Gold* album with the gold colored platter. Sure we never play it, but it means something more to her than just the information (music) stored on it. My sister, an original bobby-soxer, still has her 45 RPM recording of Danny and the Juniors singing "At the Hop" (1957) and she hasn't owned a record player in years.

Twenty years ago, every records manager had to deal with six basic problems:
1. Most managers were reluctant to ever destroy any record; they were seen as too valuable to ever be destroyed.
2. In the quest for "efficiency", other managers destroyed records much too soon.
3. It was difficult to find and retrieve some records.
4. Many valuable and historical records disappeared forever through neglect, omission or commission.
5. We continually ran out of room to store records.
6. Higher management didn't have the time or the will to deal with records management problems.

Twenty years ago, the federal government (EPA, OSHA, EEOC, etc) had regulations that had minor effects on records keeping and records retention. Newer regulations are more comprehensive and more intrusive on everyday practices. Federal reporting requirements have become burdensome to some agencies. Count yourself among the lucky if you don't have to know what FERPA or HIPAA stand for (student and medical records). New federal and state mandates have created or complicated recordkeeping problems.

Twenty years ago, control of anything of a technological nature was highly centralized (data processing and microfilming, for example). These processes were too intricate for most employees to understand. Manufacturers and vendors have done a good job of making technology user friendly. Twenty years ago, the only computer in a large office was probably a dedicated accounting application or a dedicated word processor, available for senior management's tasks. Now most employees have a computer on their desk or at least available and you can use the computer without knowledge of Basic, Fortran or Cobol. We have decentralized computer operations, although that trend may be reversing. Now we have a whole new batch of electronic recordkeeping problems.

Twenty years ago, we only had a paper in-box. Daily, we would go through our incoming paper mail and make choices on what to do with each item. Is it a public record? Do I have to respond? Should I save it? Should I file it? Can I through it away? Can I pass the buck to someone else? We have a new type of in-box now; an e-mail in-box. We still have to make the same choices for each incoming item but we are reluctant to do it. That's a new recordkeeping problem.

Twenty years ago, classes, lectures and presentations were presented with flip charts, posters, slides, chalkboards and sundry other tools. Everyone did it differently, some better than others, but that made it interesting. Sometimes the highlight of a lecture was the collapse of an easel. When PowerPoint and its competitors came out, it was new and different. But now everyone uses PowerPoint and it's becoming stale. Are PowerPoint presentations public records? It's another new recordkeeping problem.

Computers, automation and technology are great timesavers, at least I've been told that, but they do simplify the problems of records managers, or do they? Let's look at that and itemize the problems:
1. Computers make it easy to store a large volume of material. Many electronic records don't get destroyed when it should and unaccounted for copies of records may exist in cyberspace.
2. It is very easy to accidentally or deliberately delete and destroy electronic records, so some records are destroyed well before their time. Current database and spreadsheet practices continually remove old, possibly important information.
3. It is extremely difficult to locate someone else's files on a computer or even your own electronic files, over time.
4. Many valuable records stored on tapes or disks have been lost through maintenance failures, failures to migrate, accidental deletions or malicious destructions.
5. We continually must budget for more and more on-line and/or off-line storage. No storage device will ever be big enough because programs and files will continually expand to fill the void.
6. Higher management will always have more important problems than records management.

The more things change, the more they stay the same!

Frank English
A soon to be retired, cranky old man
May, 2004

"Water, Water, Everywhere…"
Preventing and Responding to Water Damage

Jeff Snyder, Records and Information Management Analyst

"Water is a very good servant, but it is a cruel master."
C.G.D. Roberts, "Adrift in America", 1891

Preventing Water Damage

Water is all around us, and consequently, it has many ways of finding its way to our records. It can burst in pipes over our heads and below our feet. It can seep in from leaking roofs or spring up from backed-up drains. Moreover, natural water events such as hurricanes and/or floods can wreak havoc on valuable records. When you consider all these sources, it's not difficult to see why the most common disasters to befall records are caused by water.

Since water damage by far is the most common disaster to happen to records, let's examine simple, yet effective ways to prevent water from damaging your records. By implementing the following preventative measures, you can significantly reduce the damage to your records should they fall victim to a water intrusion.

- Never store records on the floor; keep them off the floor at least six inches.

- Store records in their proper place, i.e., file cabinets, boxes, map cases, etc.

- Never leave exposed documents out overnight.

- Look for records stored close to the floor; these records are vulnerable to any water incident.

- Inspect record storage areas on a regular basis.

- Know what water hazards exist in your region, i.e., flood history, snow or electrical storms, etc.

- Check areas that are susceptible to water damage during and immediately after rainstorms or other inclement weather.

- Establish an Emergency Supply Closet and make sure relevant personnel are aware of its location.

• • •

"Nothing on earth is so weak and yielding as water, but for breaking down the firm and strong it has no equal."   Lao-Tsze

Responding to Water Damage

Despite the best planning and prevention, water damage can still occur due to events beyond our control. The following is a list of measures to take if water finds its way to your records.

1. Think (Human) Safety First! Always remember that the value of any record is always subordinate to the safety of personnel.

2. Evacuate the Site if Necessary.

3. Identify and Evaluate: What is the source of the water and; how severe is the intrusion? By assessing the situation ASAP, you can act quickly and decisively.

4. Notify the Appropriate Personnel. Know who to notify for water damage recovery operations. See below listing of sources for recovery assistance.

5. Protect Records. If possible, try to protect records from further damage (i.e., covering with plastic sheeting or removing from facility). If records are moved, you must document what was moved and their new location.

• • •

"Water is the best of all things" Pindar (C. 522-C. 438 B.C.), Olympian Odes

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Recovering records from water damage requires expert assistance. Environment stabilization, various methods of drying, dehumidification procedures, and packing and transferring records for treatment are very specialized techniques which are best handled by professionals who have experience in dealing with water incidents. The Library of Virginia, Records Management and Information Services Division have a special section on their web site (http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/manuals/dp-wkbk.htm) on Disaster Recovery including a workbook for use by Virginia state and local government employees. If you would like additional information, or have questions about disaster planning or protection of vital records, please don't hesitate to contact me at jsnyder@lva.lib.va.us or Ben Smith, State Records Center, at bbsmith@lva.lib.va.us.

Below is a listing of companies that specialize in water incident recovery, in addition to providing other disaster recovery services. Contact information for these companies may be found on the above LVA web link or at the company's web site. (The Library of Virginia does not endorse any of the following.)

Raves for RIM Week
April 4 – 10, 2004

Over 300 state and locality records managers/staff and other interested people [including one from Florida] attending the 5 days of events at The Library of Virginia. A panel discussion on e-mail, vendor exhibits, and a luncheon sponsored by Virginia Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators (VAGARA) and the Circuit Court Records Preservation Program started the week. Other events included workshops, State Records Center tours, and a state records officer meeting and reception sponsored by The Library of Virginia Foundation.
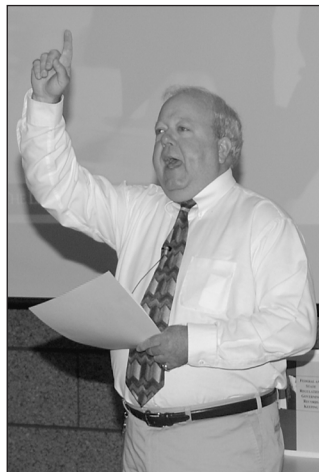
Digitally reformatting your Records

What's Involved when you scan?

Christopher Gorey, LVA Electronic Records Coordinator

The digital age is upon us. Consequently, more and more organizations are relying on technical solutions and computer-based systems to help make their operations more efficient. More often than not, for records managers the advent of the digital age has produced more questions than answers.

There are many issues involved in the reformatting of records with not one "right" set of answers for everyone. However, there are some fundamental guidelines that records professionals can use in their approach to the topic of imaging. This article will discuss what the primary records management issues are when it comes to digitally reformatting records and what the records manager's responsibilities are.

The first question most people ask is, "Is it legal?" The answer is yes. Unless your records retention and disposition schedule, or some other law, specifically prohibits it; Virginia state agencies and localities can reformat records at their discretion – this includes scanning.

It is important to remember that the existing records retention schedule will still apply. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the legal guidelines for public records management are the Records Retention and Disposition Schedules issued by this agency. These retention schedules are written according to record series (e.g. fiscal records, agency-specific records, general correspondence etc.) not record format (i.e. paper, microfilm, or electronic). Therefore, if a record is reformatted from its paper form to an electronic form the existing retention schedule still applies.

"What to do with the originals?" is usually the next question. The answer to this depends on what type of record you are dealing with - permanent or non-permanent.

The Copies as Evidence Section 8.01-391 of the *Code of Virginia* allows agencies and localities to produce a digital image (copy) of a record in response to a court subpoena or *Freedom of Information Act* request. For most non-permanent records, the agency that reformatted the records can destroy the originals without using the RM-3 Form (Certificate of Records Destruction), given that the following conditions are met:

- A Quality Control process is in place sufficient to certify that the imaged records have been visually inspected and are legible and correct.
- An indexing system is in place so that any particular record can be retrieved when needed.
- The system must keep the records safe and accessible during the entire length of their retention period as outlined by their records retention schedule, which in some cases can be many years.

- The system must be able to reproduce technical drawings and blueprints to scale.
- If the records are considered vital records, a security copy of the records and the indexing system must be stored offsite in a secure location.
- An RM-3 form is required when records are deleted (destroyed) from the system.

Permanent records, (records that have continuing administrative, legal, fiscal, or historic value) may also be reformatted. However, before any action is taken regarding the originals of these records, the records analyst for the state agency or locality must be contacted.

Even if you meet all of the above criteria, it is important to remember that it is the responsibility of the agency which created the record to maintain access to that record for the entire length of the retention period. Electronic media is extremely fragile relative to paper or microfilm and is not considered a good medium for permanent retention. In the case of records with lengthy retention periods, storing electronic files for long periods of time raises difficult issues. Hardware and software platforms are constantly evolving, prompting the need to refresh media, upgrade software programs, and in some cases to migrate files to new formats. Also computer systems need to be backed up and provisions for disaster recovery need to be implemented.

The issues associated with long term preservation of electronic records are difficult and there is no one unified school of thought on how best to proceed. In many cases, for long term preservation it is best to retain a paper or microfilm copy of the record. However, electronic records provide fast and comprehensive access and reduce the need for physical storage space. For the records manager in the digital age, effective records management often requires a balancing act between access and preservation. Achieving both should be the ultimate goal of any records digitization program.

Transport continued ... stored at The Library of Virginia State Records Center would cost .27¢ or $153.09 per month. **And** we would retrieve boxes or file folders for you and send them to you. No more wading though mountains of boxes looking for what you need.

As you can see, we have made transferring records to The Library of Virginia State Record Center very, very easy with one phone call. Offsite storage of inactive records is not only the right thing to do, but economical, as well. I look forward to hearing from you to discuss your records transfer needs. I may be reached at (804) 236-3711 or by email at bbsmith@lva.lib.va.us.

Have You Inspected Your Film Lately?

Sue W. Woo, Imaging Services Supervisor

Have you ever wonder what that blob is on your film images? Or why there is a yellowish or reddish tint to the images? And what is that odor? These and other questions spring into one's mind while inspecting security or original microfilm/fiche, normally considered permanent, that are stored and occasionally used. Improper handling, poor storage conditions, and pollutants are some of the culprits for damaging film.

Normally, camera negative roll film or fiche is evaluated for quality after processing. The microfilm/fiche should be placed in a chemically non-reactive and non-corroding enclosure and storage container, and then placed in a climatic control storage facility for optimal storage conditions. The recommended environmental conditions for archival storage are temperature less than 70º F (21º C) and a relative humidity between 20 and 30%. Even with the best environmental storage conditions, microfilm/fiche should be periodically inspected to verify the film's physical soundness and to be able to duplicate the film before it is completely ruined. Some of the problems that may be found during inspection are described below.

Film inspections should be preformed on a regular cycle and should included: rereading of resolution test target and density, inspecting for residual processing chemicals, mold/mildew, film curl or discoloration, brittleness, fused film, base shrinkage, redox blemishes and vinegar syndrome. The Association for Information and Image Management International (AIIM) [http://standards.aiim.org.] provides two standards documents for the inspection of microfilm/fiche. They are:

> ANSI/AIIM MS-45 Standard - Recommended Practice for Inspection of Stored Silver-Gelatin Microforms for Evidence of Deterioration Standard
> ANSI/AIIM MS-23 Standard – Recommended Practice for Production, Inspection, and Quality Assurance of First-Generation, Silver Microforms of Documents

The most common problem found during inspections is Redox blemishes or measles. This problem is associated with poor storage conditions or inferior package materials. The blemishes may be reddish or yellowish spots ranging from 15 to 150 microns in diameter with a tiny nucleus at their center. In severe cases, the color is so prominent that they may be seen with the naked eye on the silver halide film. If this is not caught in a timely manner, the data will be destroyed.

The National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) notes that there are six different types of blemishes. Blemishes are formed on the film due to the reaction of image silver with atmospheric pollutants such as perioxides, ozone, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, or others that occur in industrial atmosphere. Peroxides also may be present in some of the wood used for paper and cardboard production and found in the aging paper inserts and cardboard containers commonly used in storing film.

Treatment for redox blemishes is determined by the extent of the deterioration found during inspection. Not all film with redox needs to be immediately replaced as replacing leaders and trailers to retard the spread of redox blemishes or cleaning the film with approved materials may save the original film. Film that is in poor or bad condition must be duplicated immediately in order to salvage the remaining information. **Remember that the replacement must be treated as a "new" roll of film generated from a camera and undergo the same inspection requirements as new film.**

A second problem is known as "vinegar syndrome". An acidic smell may be noticed when checking cellulose acetate or nitrate film. This sharp vinegar odor is due to film degradation as it gradually shrinks and becomes brittle, generating acetic acid which evaporates into the air. There is one method that may be used to monitor the extent of the acetate level by placing strips of ph sensitive paper (A-D Strips or equivalent) inside each closed container.

And lastly, fungus spores. They are found in the surrounding air and are usually quite harmless in a dry cool environment. But when the relative humidity is above 60% and the temperature is about 21º C (70º F) for any length of time, there is a tendency for mold or mildew to grow on microfilm. Minor surface fungus may be removed with an approved film cleaning fluid. Do not use water or water solutions as it may lead to disintegration of the image. Damage to the emulsion side of a roll of film is usually permanent.

Despite any preventive measurements taken, visual re-inspection of microfilm/fiche must be done on a regular basis to detect film defects such as fungus, fused film, brittleness, vinegar syndrome, and redox blemishes. If regular inspections are not performed and film defects are not discovered, the information (record) may be lost forever if the original hardcopy has been destroyed.

SIG continued ... In addition to periodic meetings a listserv has been started for the group. The listserv is moderated by a member of the Records Management and Imaging Services Division using The Library of Virginia IT department's technical know-how and expertise. On the EdSIG, listserv members may ask questions and provide feedback to each other on how they are dealing with certain records issues in their school division. The listserv has provided members the opportunity to share with one another their expertise and insights on school records. Some of the subjects that have been discussed on the

listserv have concerned FERPA (Family Education Records Privacy Act), the charging of fees, and other issues that affect their duties as records officers.

The Records Management and Imaging Services Division plans on expanding our SIG groups in the near future. Look for groups that will encompass colleges and universities, health and human services, public health, and law enforcement. There just might be a SIG in your future.

Records Management Workshops

These free workshops are designed for all designated Records Officers and others who have records management responsibilities. For further information on the workshops or to register on-line go to http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/rectrain/index.htm. Any changes or additions will be posted to our Web site.

Records Management 101: The Basics

This introductory workshop on the basics of records management is the first records class on which the other LVA's records management workshops build on. It is an overview of records management including benefits, terminology, laws and regulations, records lifecycle, and program elements. Disposition processes and procedures are covered with special emphasis on the completion of the RM-17, *Records Transfer List and Receipt*, and RM-3, *Certificate of Records Destruction*.

| September 9, 2004 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 9:00 a.m.–noon |
| January 11, 2005 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 9:00 a.m.–noon |

Managing your Paper and Electronic Records

Messy desks? Messy computer drives? Unable to find the information you need? This class will provide information on records storage and retrieval (filing) systems, files classification systems, equipment, and maintenance and control for managing paper and electronic recordkeeping systems. The workshop will also discuss inactive records maintenance and storage.

| September 9, 2004 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00–4:00 p.m. |
| January 11, 2005 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00–4:00 p.m. |

The Next Step-Intermediate Records Management

This workshop builds on the introductory course "Records Management 101 – The Basics" and is targeted to assigned agency/locality records managers/coordinators who are responsible for the agency's records management program. This presentation will discuss the processes for identifying new and existing official record files as well as collecting the information needed to produce effective records retention/disposition schedules. Obtaining management and staff support for the records management program, implementing the schedules within the office, and auditing the program's effectiveness will also be covered.

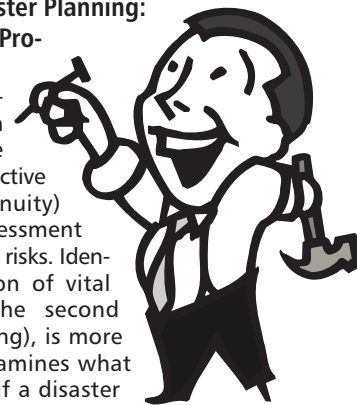| September 23, 2004 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 9:00 a.m.–noon |
| January 19, 2005 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 9:00 a.m.–noon |

Managing Electronic Records – A Technical Approach

The workshop will provide practical real-world advice and guidance in the management of websites, email, database systems, local area networks, and individual workstations from a sound records management perspective. It has been designed for agency and locality IT personnel as well as records managers seeking a greater knowledge of technical solutions for managing electronic records.

| September 23, 2004 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00–4:00 p.m. |
| January 19, 2005 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00–4:00 p.m. |

Business Continuity/Disaster Planning: A Proactive Approach to Protecting Your Records

The topic of disaster planning is discussed with a two prong scheme. The workshop first takes a proactive approach (business continuity) and will focus on risk assessment and the mitigation of those risks. Identification and preservation of vital records is discussed. The second approach (disaster planning), is more reactive in nature and examines what can and should be done if a disaster occurs. Planning for, recovery from, and available resources are covered.

| September 15, 2004 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 9:00 a.m.–noon |
| January 25, 2005 | Library of Virginia Richmond, 9:00 a.m.–noon |

State Records Center

This session describes the services provided by the State Records Center and includes a tour of the facility. A guide for using the State Records Center designed for Records Officers, Records Coordinators and designated records management staff will be provided to each attendee.

| September 15, 2004 | State Records Center Richmond, 1:00–4:00 p.m. |
| January 25, 2005 | State Records Center Richmond, 1:00–4:00 p.m. |

Basics to Business Continuity (and everywhere in between)

This two-day workshop will provide attendees an overview of all phases of managing recorded information, from defining a record to inventorying and scheduling records through file organization and access to information security finishing with business continuity and disaster recovery. Will two days make you an expert? No, but it will provide an understanding of the wide range of records and information management issues, ideas for proceeding in basic and advanced areas of records management, and resources for further learning.

| September 15 and 16 | Lonesome Pine Regional Library Coeburn Community Center Coeburn, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day |
| October 7 and 8 | Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy Weyers Cave, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day |

We hope you enjoy this issue and welcome your comments and suggestions for future editions.